

# New Testament Explored: Revelation

## Week 1: Why do people go crazy over the book of Revelation?

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### (1) Why do people go crazy over the book of Revelation?

- a) *We read Revelation like a scientist when more accurately it speaks in the language of an artist.*
- b) *We think Revelation speaks about the future when primarily it speaks about the present.*
- c) *We treat Revelation like a secret code when it actually gives a sacred lens to God's people.*

Reading "pictures" that describes two very different approaches for interpreting Revelation:

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|--------------------------------------|-----|--|
| • <b>Code</b> [deciphering]          | vs. | <b>Lens</b> [discerning]                   |
| • <b>Crystal Ball</b> [prediction]   | vs. | <b>X-Ray</b> [perspective]                 |
| • <b>Map</b> [1-to-1 correspondence] | vs. | <b>Compass</b> [orientation to true north] |
| • <b>Fear</b> [problems]             | vs. | <b>Hope</b> [promises]                     |

- d) *We read Revelation as if it were about us when it is primarily about God.*
- e) *We worship the cultural idol of control, involving serious preparation for and focus on the future.*

### (2) We can relax about our interpretation of Revelation when we see it in proper doctrinal perspective.

Doctrines can be ranked in this way (see G. Ortlund, *Finding the Right Hills to Die On* [Crossway, 2020]):

- **First-rank doctrines** are *essential* to the gospel itself (e.g., the deity of Christ).
- **Second-rank doctrines** are *urgent* for the health and practice of the church such that they frequently cause Christians to separate at the level of local church (e.g., infant Baptism vs. believer's Baptism).
- **Third-rank doctrines** are *important* to Christian theology, but not enough to justify separation or division among Christians (e.g., premillennialism vs. amillennialism).
- **Fourth-rank doctrines** are *unimportant* to our gospel witness and ministry collaboration (e.g., hymns vs. contemporary worship).

### (3) Revelation shows the world as God's temple and invites us to look through its stained-glass windows.

- Window 1 – **Christ, the Savior**, sitting in the middle of his churches (Rev. 1-3).
- Window 2 – **Christ, the Lamb**, sitting on the throne of the world (Rev. 4-11).
- Window 3 – **Christ, the Conqueror**, crushing all his enemies (Rev. 11-15).
- Window 4 – **Christ, the Judge**, extending his holiness throughout creation (Rev. 15-19).

- Window 5 – **Christ, the Bridegroom**, dwelling with his people in the new creation (Rev. 19-22).